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Santa Clara County's Economic Futures



INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENTAL
STUDIES

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

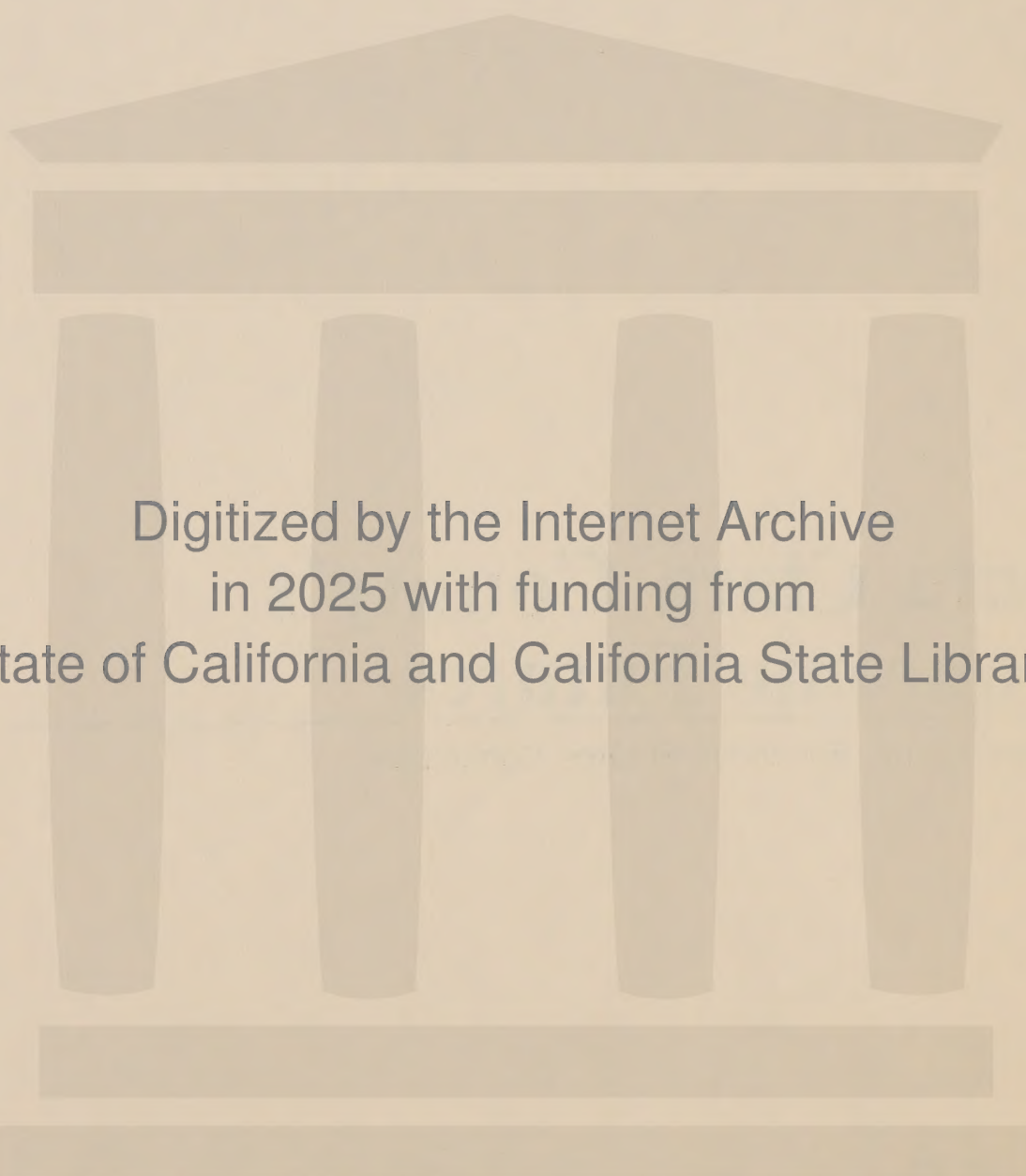
A REPORT FROM THE
ECONOMIC FUTURES COMMITTEE

Santa Clara County's Economic Futures

A Report by the Economic Futures Committee

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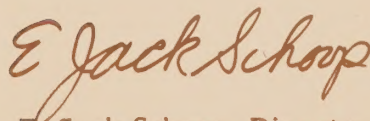
Dear Decision-Maker:

The future of Santa Clara County need not just happen.

That's the plea of the Santa Clara County Economic Futures Committee in the attached report.

The Committee sees continued rapid growth as almost inevitable because of Silicon Valley's "self-generating" expansion. It makes ten recommendations to accommodate that growth without impairing the quality of life we enjoy here.

After careful reading, your teaming with other decision-makers -- public and private -- is invited in order to keep Santa Clara County an enjoyable place to live while its economy continues to grow.



E. Jack Schoop, Director
Planning & Development
Santa Clara County




Peter B. Giles
on behalf of the
Economic Futures Committee

Foreword

To the Reader:

To plan for the future we need to know where the economy of Santa Clara County is headed. I asked the people closest to running the economy to tell me what they saw ahead. Herewith is the future they—and economists, demographers and educators—see. People of action, they also spoke to the implications for the future development of the County and its quality of life.



E. Jack Schoop, Director
Department of Planning and Development

Members of the Santa Clara County's Economic Futures Committee

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Overview

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Santa Clara County faces continued strong growth. Employment is growing twice as fast as population. Will it smother the County with far-worsened traffic jams and resulting smog? Or will the necessary steps be taken to absorb the growth without great impacts on the desirability of living in this part of the Bay Area?

Santa Clara County is the largest employment center in the San Francisco Bay Area, and third largest in the State. Most of this growth is self-generating. Industry is born and nurtured here, then moves elsewhere as it expands. No Chamber of Commerce efforts or economic incentives are offered to spur or keep the growth. Regulatory restraints have hardly slowed it.

The foundation of Santa Clara County's economy are the new high tech firms. As the incubator of new ideas and products, they are vital underpinning of the new national economy based on technology and communication.

This report looks at the major factors that will shape our country's future during the rest of this century. It recommends actions to maximize the opportunities and minimize the problems.

Growth Forecasts

For most of the last three decades, Santa Clara County has had one of the fastest growth rates in the country. Recent projections indicate that the county will continue to experience rapid growth through the remainder of this decade, particularly employment growth in high technology industries.

The 275,000 new jobs created in Santa Clara County between 1970 and 1980 accounted for 50% of the employment growth in the entire nine county Bay Area. About one-third of the employment growth forecast for the nine-county Bay Area between 1980 and 1990 is projected to occur in Santa Clara County.

Some of the current forecasts are shown below. More recently published data from a survey by the Santa Clara County Manufacturing Group projects 42,000 more workers in the county in the next two years!

While there is some difference among the various projections, all anticipate substantial continued growth in Santa Clara County.

ABAG POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT FORECASTS FOR SANTA CLARA COUNTY

	1980	1985	1990	2000
Population	1,295,100	1,370,500	1,433,000	1,504,000
Employment	698,950	763,000	846,100	1,041,000
	Increase 1980-1990	Increase 1990-2000	Increase 1980-2000	
Population				
Amount	137,900	71,000	208,900	
Percent	11%	5%	14%	
Employment				
Amount	147,150	194,900	342,050	
Percent	21%	23%	33%	

Source: "Projections '83", June 1983
Association of Bay Area Governments

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND HOUSING FORECASTS**

	1980*	1985	1990	Percent Increase 1980-1990
Population	1,251,000	—	1,342,000	7%
Employment	692,000	—	855,000	24%
Housing Units	469,000	—	542,000	16%

Source: "General Plan, Santa Clara County", 1982

*Estimates made prior to release of 1980 Census

**CENTER FOR CONTINUING STUDY OF THE CALIFORNIA ECONOMY
FORECASTS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY JOB GROWTH
IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR**

	1972-1981 Growth	1981-1990 Growth		
		Low	Base	High
High Tech Mfg.	104,500	62,200	83,200	131,300
Other Mfg.	17,900	16,500	16,500	16,500
Total Mfg.	122,400	78,700	99,700	147,800

Source: "Projection of High Tech and Total Manufacturing Jobs
in Santa Clara County to 1990"

Center for the Continuing Study of the California Economy
April, 1983

The County's Special Role as an Incubator for High Technology

Santa Clara County owes much of its current economic vitality to its role as an incubator for new high technology firms and products. Available here are technical expertise, specialized services and supplies, and venture capital. Combined, they make the County a particularly attractive place for the formation of new high technology companies and the development of new technologies and products.

New jobs being created by these start-up companies account for most of the employment growth forecast for this county. The new products they develop are often manufactured elsewhere once high volume is reached. Thus Santa Clara County is creating jobs for other parts of the Bay Area, California, and the United States.

Even more importantly, the technologies and products developed by these innovative new firms keep the United States in the forefront of high technology developments. Many of the United States older basic industries are declining; maintaining our county's leadership in the field of high technology is increasingly more important to our nation's economy.

Major Factors That Will Affect the County's Future Economy and Quality of Life

The future economy and quality of life in Santa Clara County will be influenced and shaped by a great many different forces, events and decisions. Most likely to exert the greatest influence on the County's future are the following:

International economic competition

Economic competition from other parts of the U.S.

The adequacy of local labor force

Education

Housing

Transportation

Planning for future growth

Maintenance of existing infrastructure

Provision of necessary infrastructure improvements and expansion.

Transportation

Sewage Treatment

Flood Control

Funding of Needed Services and Facilities

Protection of environmental amenities

Following sections briefly describe each of these factors and their importance to the health of the County's economy and the overall quality of life here. Most of the factors are interrelated. Expanding the housing supply for example, needs to be accompanied by improvements in sewage treatment and transportation facilities.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COMPETITION

If we do not support the development of innovative companies, our nation's position of pre-eminence may be lost, and with it many jobs in our local economy

Santa Clara County's healthy, growing economy largely results from its pre-eminent position in the forefront of electronics technology. This position is being strongly challenged by other countries, particularly Japan. If we do not support the development of innovative companies, our nation's position of pre-eminence may be lost, and with it many jobs in our local economy.

This competition with other countries extends not only to developing new technologies and products, but also to marketing them throughout the world at minimum cost. A major cost component is labor. Santa Clara County is already seeing the exodus of manufacturing jobs due to labor costs that are higher than elsewhere in the United States and other parts of the world. This exodus has mainly involved manufacturing jobs. In time, as competition with other areas increases, it could affect research and development functions as well.

COMPETITION FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES

Not only other countries, but also other parts of the United States are actively and aggressively seeking to attract high tech firms from "Silicon Valley."

At the present time Santa Clara County has several competitive advantages over most of these other areas: readily available venture capital for start up firms; readily available supplies of the special skills, materials, and services needed by high tech firms; several nearby colleges and universities and the amenities and quality of life of the Bay Area.

We cannot afford to assume, however, that we will always have these advantages. As other areas expand their electronics industries and related support services, they too may be able to offer many of the same advantages as Santa Clara County. In addition, they may be able to offer lower housing costs to prospective employees and, consequently, lower labor force costs to prospective employers.

For example, the Microelectronics and Computer Training Corporation, a non-profit joint venture of twelve major U.S. corporations, recently decided to build its research center in Austin, Texas. Some of the reasons were the high cost of housing in Santa Clara County and doubts about the quality of education in California. Intel, AMD, Lockheed, Tandem, and Rolm have also set up operations in the Austin area. With improvements in the computer and engineering courses at colleges and universities in that area, and with the potential venture capital in the state of Texas, Austin could become a very serious threat to the high tech dominance of Santa Clara County.

THE LOCAL LABOR FORCE

The ability to obtain qualified workers at salaries that are competitive with those they would have to pay in other areas is a major consideration in the decisions of businesses to locate or expand their facilities in Santa Clara County. Education, housing, and transportation are key variables affecting the local labor supply.

EDUCATION

An increasing percentage of future jobs in Santa Clara County will be in high tech electronics industries. Critical to them are an educated, skilled labor force. For county residents to capture these new jobs, they must have suitable education or training. The reputation of the county's schools is also critical in recruiting employees from other areas.

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Unfortunately, the educational system in Santa Clara County is in serious trouble. Most schools in Santa Clara County have larger class sizes, fewer counselors, and shorter school days than the national average.

Here in the heart of the high technology revolution, there is also a serious shortage of math and science teachers due to budget cutbacks, the seniority layoff system, and a shortage of students graduating from local colleges and universities qualified to teach math and science. Budget cuts are also resulting in cutbacks in industrial arts and vocational education classes to train, or retrain, county residents for jobs available in the high tech field. The community colleges and San Jose State University report serious erosion of teaching equipment (labs) and professors leaving for the private sector.

The seniority layoff system has resulted in a teaching population in this area with an average age in the 50's nearing the time when many teachers retire. This may provide an opportunity to bring in fresh teaching talent if the right incentives can be provided.

HOUSING

The high cost of housing results from a number of factors: the declining supply of residentially zoned land in the northern portion of the county, and local land use plans and regulations, and neighborhood opposition to increasing housing densities.

The cost of housing in Santa Clara County is among the highest in the nation. The cost of an existing home in the county is about 13% above the median for the State of California and almost double the median national price.

These high housing costs are a major impediment to efforts by local industries to attract workers they need from other parts of the country.

The high cost of housing also causes companies to move their high-volume operations elsewhere; so far there does not appear to be a significant movement of research and development operations out of Santa Clara County.

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TRANSPORTATION

The most observable measure of the quality of life to most people is the ease with which our transportation system permits us to move about the County to work and other destinations. All current projections indicate traffic will get worse during the coming years due to such factors as the geographic gap between jobs and housing, the lack of funds to build all the necessary improvements, and continued public preference for the private automobile over public transit.

Solution to the county's transportation problems will require a combination of actions: construction of new transportation facilities, making more efficient use of existing facilities, and encouraging commute alternatives such as public transit, carpooling and vanpooling.

PLANNING FOR FUTURE GROWTH

With employment growth will come substantial increases in population, traffic, housing demand, etc.

Accommodating that anticipated future growth, without lowering the quality of life in the County, will require careful planning.

Much of the anticipated future growth will occur in areas that are currently undeveloped and lack detailed plans to guide their future development. Given the facts that (1) much of the developable area north of San Jose is already developed and (2) redevelopment and intensification of use there is usually stoutly resisted by neighborhood organizations, most of the growth will gravitate into San Jose and the South Valley.

The County's basic land use policies over the last decade have assumed that the primary responsibility for planning for future urban development rested with the individual cities, since they were the ones who would be responsible for providing urban services and facilities to serve that development.

Recently, however, the County has been re-assessing its role in planning for future growth and development. The need to increase County revenue sources (because cities have been preempting more of the property and sales tax revenues) has caused the County to explore the potential cost-revenue impacts of allowing urban development in unincorporated areas.

If the high quality of life presently enjoyed in Santa Clara County is to be maintained, it is imperative that cities and the county resolve their tax-sharing difficulties and get on with jointly planning the future development of the County. If such cooperation cannot be achieved, a bolder county-wide planning and regulatory initiative will be needed; that was the dominant recommendation of the May 18, 1983 widely-sponsored Land Use Symposium in Santa Clara.

Accommodating that anticipated future growth, without lowering the quality of life in the County, will require careful planning.

If the quality of life in Santa Clara County is to be maintained, it is imperative that cities and the county resolve their tax-sharing difficulties and get on with jointly planning the future development of the County.

MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Maintenance of the County's existing infrastructure—our roads and highways, sewage treatment and water supply systems, and other such public facilities—is critical to both the quality of life and the future growth of the County's economy.

A 1982 Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) study concluded that there is an annual funding shortfall of \$28 million to maintain local streets and roads in Santa Clara County.

This does not include Santa Clara County's portion of the estimated \$300-500 million that would be required for the entire Bay Area to repair segments of the street network that have deteriorated beyond the point where they can be adequately preserved by a regular paving maintenance program. Nor does it include the estimated \$29 million in damage caused to roads in Santa Clara County by the last two winters' heavy rains.

The cost of performing necessary maintenance of our roadways is much less than what it may cost to rebuild them if they are allowed to deteriorate beyond the point where routing maintenance is possible. For example, the cost of applying roadway seals is around \$1 per square yard and the cost to apply overlays runs around \$6 per square yard; whereas the cost of rebuilding a completely failed road ranges from \$12 to \$50 per square yard.

A 5 cents per gallon gas tax to fund local roadway maintenance and construction would raise an estimated \$33.5 million per year in Santa Clara County. That would still be less than is needed to just maintain our streets and repair storm damages, but it would be a tremendously needed and very noticable improvement. It would cost the average motorist about \$25 per year. This is considerably less than she or he is currently paying to drive over deteriorating roads taking into account increased tire wear, higher maintenance costs such as wheel alignments, increased likelihood of accidents, etc.).

PROVISION OF NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE ADDITIONS

There [is] a need for approximately \$600 million in improvements in major roadways, transit facilities wastewater treatment facilities and flood control facilities over the next five years.

Much of Santa Clara County's existing infrastructure is at or near the limits of its present capacity. To accommodate the projected economic and population growth without lowering the quality of life in the County, we will need to expand our existing road network and provide additional sewage treatment plant capacity. We will also have to find sources of funds to construct many of these needed improvements.

A 1981 study by the California Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) of the infrastructure needs in Santa Clara County estimated that there was a need for approximately \$600 million in improvements in major roadways, transit facilities, and flood control facilities over the next five years.

All available studies of the infrastructure construction needs of Santa Clara County conclude that there is insufficient funding to construct all needed facilities. Most of them also conclude that, unless sources of funding are found for these projects, the County's problems will get worse and future economic development and quality of life will be inhibited.

Transportation Facility Improvements _____

A number of major transportation facility improvements are needed to meet the County's present and future transportation needs. The costs of these improvements will be great. It is estimated, for example, that it will cost \$210 million to upgrade Highway 237 to an 8-lane freeway. Construction of the Guadalupe Corridor light rail system is expected to cost an estimated \$320 million to \$364 million. And these are only two of the transportation facility improvements needed to help improve traffic conditions in Santa Clara County. Another key link needed to ease traffic movement through the County is Route 85 from South San Jose to Cupertino which would cost an estimated \$750 million.

A report of the City of San Jose's Horizon 2000 Project recently concluded that there will be a \$26 million shortfall in revenue for construction of the \$82.5 million of City streets required for General Plan buildout after completion of projects identified in the 1983-88 Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Sewage Treatment Facility Improvements _____

The sewage treatment plants in San Jose and the South County, where most growth potential exists are currently at or very near the limits of their capacities. Providing for future growth will require expansion of existing facilities or construction of new ones.

San Jose's Horizon 2000 Project concluded that if there is to be more growth than is contemplated in the City's present adopted General Plan, an additional sewage treatment facility will be required. The estimated cost of such a facility would be around \$105 million.

Similar sewage treatment capacity constraints exist in the South Valley areas around Morgan Hill and Gilroy.

The sewage treatment plans in San Jose and the South County, where most growth potential exists are currently at or very near the limits of their capacities.

Flood Control Improvements _____

This past winter's rains and resultant floods illustrate the need to improve local flood control facilities. The estimated cost of constructing the remaining 100-year flood improvements in San Jose alone is estimated at between \$179.5 and \$215.5 million, including \$18 million to provide flood protection in the Coyote Valley. The funding source for \$45.2 million of this total is currently unknown.

FUNDING OF NEEDED SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The theme of inadequate funding keeps recurring as we attempt to plan for and manage our future growth. Local government revenue limitations adopted by California voters, together with diminishing State and Federal aid to local governments, make it increasingly difficult for local governments to provide the services and facilities necessary to accommodate anticipated growth.

Developing new sources of revenue to fund needed community services and facilities will be essential to the maintenance of the economic vitality and especially quality of life in Santa Clara County through the remainder of this decade.

Developing new sources of revenue to fund needed community services and facilities will be essential to the maintenance of the economic vitality and especially the quality of life in Santa Clara County through the remainder of this decade. These costs will far outstrip the revenues that can be recovered from permits and fees.

Unfortunately, the greater the number of people in an area, the more complicated their service needs become. It costs more to live in a city than in the country for that reason. Taxpayers have severely cut back local taxes and caused the Federal government to reduce expenditures apparently unawares of the cost implications of a growing population. Innovative financing approaches, private public partnerships, and maximum cost-cutting are not keeping up. Public support of some local tax increases (with a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority required by Proposition 13) and also some state tax increases are the "bottom line" if quality of life is to be maintained in the face of projected employment growth.

When new funding sources are provided, local agencies must also be given flexibility to determine how these monies will be spent so that unique local needs and conditions can be taken into account.

PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND AMENITIES

Preservation of scenic and functional open space lands for recreation and other purposes should be an integral part of the planning of areas for future development.

Among the many things that contribute to the overall quality of life in Santa Clara County is the beauty of the County's natural setting and the diversity of its natural resources. If environmental quality in the county is to be maintained, planning for future growth and development must be sensitive to the values, opportunities, and constraints the county's natural resources present.

Preservation of scenic and functional open space lands for recreation and other purposes should be an integral part of the planning of areas for future development. In addition, public park and open space acquisition must keep pace with the public recreational needs as the county's population grows and development progresses.

Protection of open spaces and prevention of air pollution heavily depends upon a good balance of industry, housing, and commercial uses to greatly reduce daily auto trips. All future development should reflect that objective.

Alternative Economic Futures of the County

There are a diversity of factors that will play a part in shaping the future of Santa Clara County. A number of different assumptions could be made about each of them; it is possible to develop many different alternatives concerning the future of the County's economy and overall quality of life.

This report focuses on two very general alternatives. Both assume that the county will continue to experience rapid employment growth due to Santa Clara County's unique position in the forefront of the burgeoning fields of high technology. Much of the growth is "home grown", not imported; it is almost impossible to stop or slow it.

The primary difference in the underlying assumptions of the two alternatives is in the extent to which the private sector and local governments plan for this anticipated growth and the needs and opportunities that it will create.

Future 1 assumes that the provision of housing, transportation improvements, sewage treatment facilities, and other major urban facilities will not keep pace with anticipated future employment and population growth. This alternative unfortunately is the current trend in Santa Clara County.

Future 2 assumes that greater efforts will be made by the private sector and local governments in Santa Clara County to plan for and allow sufficient housing development to meet anticipated growth and to plan for and obtain funding for the additional public facilities necessary to accommodate anticipated growth.

Future 1: Growth Exceeds the Housing Supply and Infrastructure Improvements

While the housing shortage and the daily commute are lowering the quality of life and causing some industries to leave the area, continued growth can and will continue because these problems are not yet severe compared to other areas where industry and people might go. That is, there is considerable room for the housing, transportation, and air quality problems to get much worse before industry and residents are forced to go elsewhere. Over the next decade, under Future 1, the following conditions could develop:

Development sprawls more and more into the remaining open lands in the South Valley.

Local governments continue to encourage industrial and commercial development, while failing to provide for sufficient housing development.

The cost of housing continues to rise, as new housing construction fails to keep pace with employment growth.

Jobs and housing remain distant from one another, intensifying the present pattern of long distance commuting to jobs in the county. Traffic congestion continues to get worse. Air pollution worsens as commuters spend more time stuck in traffic with motors idling.

Sewage treatment plant failures increase as they are forced to operate at or very close to their limits. Cities and pollution control agencies restrict building permits due to sewage treatment plant capacity limitations.

Low and moderate income families are forced out of the county because they cannot afford the cost of housing.

Roads and other urban infrastructure continue to deteriorate.

Future 2: Housing Supply and Infrastructure Improvements Keep Up with Growth

Future 2 assumes that the private and public sectors will acknowledge the impending job growth and join forces to provide the leadership necessary to plan for and manage it.

Over the next decade, under Future 2, the following conditions could develop:

Additional lands are made available for urbanization in the Coyote Valley and South Valley areas, carefully planned to balance industry, housing and commerce. Permanent open space areas are preserved within newly developing areas and as buffers between South County cities. Innovative housing is allowed to be provided in smaller, more closely located units to reduce costs and save land.

Housing becomes more affordable as housing supply more closely matches employment and population growth.

New or expanded urban infrastructure facilities, such as roads and sewage treatment facilities, are constructed to accommodate growth needs.

Commuting times are reduced, or at least no worse than today, due to expanded facilities, more efficient use of existing facilities, increased use of commute alternatives.

Regional transportation links are improved to facilitate commuting from nearby residential areas in adjacent counties.

Achieving These Futures

These two alternatives present in a very simplified fashion two quite different visions of Santa Clara County's future during the decade ahead. Future 1 presents a picture which closely parallels the directions in which the county is currently going. Future 2 presents a more attractive vision of a future we should be striving to achieve.

Achieving most of the elements of Future 2 will not be easy. It will require foresight, imagination, hard work, and cooperation between the public and private sectors to bring about the planning and funding necessary to make it a reality.

Matters of State and Federal Concern

The success or failure of Santa Clara County to deal with the serious challenges facing it should be of more than local concern. The county's unique role at the forefront of high technology research and development makes it an economic resource that should be encouraged and supported by State and Federal governments. Many companies that are expanding elsewhere get their start in the Silicon Valley "incubator". So, State and Federal investments in the infrastructure necessary to maintain the economic vitality of "Silicon Valley" should be viewed as investments in the economic future of the Bay Area, California, and the United States.

Recommendations of the Economic Futures Committee

Santa Clara County residents have a choice whether this region avoids continually worsening traffic jams, road conditions, and air quality, erosion of parks and open spaces, and possibly large unemployment and depressed values. Actions the voting public needs to support are:

1. To reduce the cost of housing:

Lenders, realtors, builders, labor, and local government unite to develop significant new funding and regulatory approaches to housing construction.

2. To increase the supply of housing near where it is needed:

Public accept higher density housing in or near existing neighborhoods.

3. Because housing cannot be provided fast enough to drastically reduce rush hour commuting:

Effectively link transit among the east and west sides of the Bay and the South Valley.

4. To assure students of jobs in the new high tech economy:

Public and Industry join to promote improvements in public education and the training of good teachers, especially in Math and Science.

5. Since the quality of life in the Valley may require facilities that cannot pay for themselves, (e.g. new County Jail):

Support carefully evaluated proposals for tax increases for vital facilities and services.

6. Since transit and highway improvements rarely keep up with actual needs:

Industry foster more group commuting, e.g. by greater monetary return to carpoolers and bus riders than single-occupant travelers.

7. Because adequate maintenance of streets and utilities is much cheaper than replacing them:

Give high funding priority to maintenance.

8. To achieve the balance of jobs, housing, and open space in the remaining developable parts of the County:

San Jose, Morgan Hill, Gilroy, and Santa Clara County cooperate to solve transportation and utility needs and balanced jobs, housing, and commerce in each section of the South Valley.

9. Because local funds can never be adequate to meet all needs and the Silicon Valley is important to the economy of the State of California and the nation:

Continue effort to obtain more shares of state and federal revenues.

10. Because state and federal aid is too often ear-marked for specific purposes that may not be the right priority in Santa Clara County:

Increase flexibility of local governments to funnel dollars where they are most needed, e.g. in transportation links or education.

The future of Santa Clara County need not just happen. It can be guided to a balancing of growth and amenity by the voters at the polls and by the cooperation of local governments among themselves and with the private sector.

The Committee

Credits

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